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# Spy units pushing for end to curbs

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WASHINGTON—The United States' intelligence community has seized on a changed national mood to press for the removal of restrictions on their agencies.

Moving on several fronts under leaders of the Central Intelligence Agency, administration officials are seeking to ease demands on disclosure of agency files under the Freedom of Information Act and to decrease requirements of informing Congress of covert schemes in advance. The restrictions were imposed in the 1970s after agency abuses of civil rights were brought to light.

Perhaps most importantly, the agencies have won support for the idea that new charters should be written for the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the CIA in a fashion to increase their powers in some areas while restricting their methods in others.

The moves are in sharp contrast to the past when, for example, then-CIA Director William Colby sat meekly at a hearing table while former Rep. Bella Abzug [D., N.Y.] ridiculed him for having her mail opened.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS, obviously pleased, contrast Colby's humiliation to the forceful — some have said arrogant — presentations recently made by CIA Director Stansfield Turner on Capitol Hill.

At a session of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Turner stunned Sen. Stevenson [D., Ill.] by disclosing that he has broken a promise to advise the intelligence panel in advance of all covert CIA activities.

Turner insisted that when he said under oath in 1977 that he would have "no difficulty" in reporting all covert plans to Stevenson, he only meant he would "try" to pass on data. Besides, Turner told Stevenson's Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, there is no law forcing him to inform that committee.

Later, Turner aides disclosed one story that the CIA had withheld from the Senate — the agency's knowledge that the Canadian diplomatic mission to Tehran was hiding six American embassy workers.

WITHIN THE so-called intelligence community, recent events in Iran and Afghanistan are credited with winning support, rather than condemnation, for the various spy agencies after nearly a decade of concern over civil liberties, domestic spying against U.S. citizens, and even efforts to kill U.S. dissenters.

A newsletter circulated among the intelligence and defense communities recently summed up the new climate by saying: "Out of the gathering clouds of the Iranian and Afghanistan crises there may be a silver lining.

"... Because of the lack of good information about Iran [before the Shah's downfall and since] there is growing sentiment on Capitol Hill to revamp the laws governing the intelligence agencies in such a way as to restore a clandestine capability."

The letter was endorsed by several hardliners, including Adm. William Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Many hardliners argue that clandestine operations are limited severely by the 1974 Hughes-Ryan Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, which requires the House and Senate Foreign Affairs committees be informed of plans for covert operations.

SPEAKING ABOUT Hughes-Ryan and the Freedom of Information Act at a recent House hearing, Frank Carlucci, deputy CIA director, said that numerous foreign intelligence networks have refused flatly to work with the CIA or other U.S. intelligence operations because they fear leaks on Capitol Hill.

Just as Turner had surprised the Senate committee with his strong position, Carlucci startled the House Government Operations Committee when he argued that he personally believes the CIA can guarantee that no information will leak. But foreign spies just don't believe that, Carlucci argued.

"Foreign agents — some very important — have either refused to accept or have terminated a relationship on the grounds that, in their minds — and it is unimportant whether they are right or not — but in their minds the CIA is no longer able to absolutely guarantee that the information which they provide the U.S. government is sacrosanct."

Following Carlucci and Turner, FBI Director William Webster and Bob Inman, director of the super-secret National Security Agency, along with representatives of the Defense Intelligence Agency made congressional appearances to argue that their agencies need some of the same relief from past reforms.

At the White House, an official told reporters that President Carter endorses "relief across the board" for intelligence officers who have complained about the Freedom of Information Act.

That prompted Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan [D., N.Y.] to wonder aloud about the changes in national mood.

Moynihan said that in the fall of 1978 Vice President Mondale, who led the drive for CIA reforms as a senator, displayed a change of heart at a meeting with lawyers for the CIA, National Security Agency, defense intelligence, and the FBI.

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